

### English Transcript for *Level 3 Research*

Level three research can be summed up in one word, connect. You have taken a lot of time to identify schools you're interested in, and to research those schools. Now it's time to connect with them on a personal level. When students are asked why they chose a certain school, an in-person visit is always the number one reason why. Unfortunately, you probably will not have the chance to physically visit the schools on your list in person. And no one expects you to visit. But through research, you can get as close to an in-person visit as possible. First, take the time to see if you can connect with the school face to face. Many colleges and universities travel outside the U.S. to meet and recruit international students like you. Some schools will host individual events. Some will visit Education USA advising centers, and some schools will participate in larger college fairs or educational expos. These visits usually happen at two different times of the year, in the fall between August and November, or the spring between January and March. If schools are visiting your city or somewhere nearby, you should absolutely try to meet with them. There are three places where you can look to see if a school is visiting your area. First, many schools will publish their international travel schedule on their website. So when you're doing your level two research, make sure you check the schools on your list to see if they'll be visiting your area. The second place you can learn about upcoming educational fairs and events is through EducationUSA. Education USA maintains a list of fairs and events on their website that you can sort by country. Online is a great start, but you should also check in with your local Education USA advising center. About visits and special events that might not be posted online. And the third place to look is through your local newspaper, media outlets, and social media. Big, educational events will often advertise that they're coming to your area. So make sure that you're checking all of the media outlets. To find out if anything is coming through. If you have the opportunity to connect with a university face to face, make sure that you ask for the person's contact information. So that you can follow up with a short thank you email. It's an important step that a lot of students forget to do. And that actually brings us to our next way to connect. If you cannot connect face to face, then try to connect online. Many international admission officers will post their contact information on the school's website. Remember, admission officers are people too. I used to be an admission officer and hopefully none of you find me particularly scary or intimidating. Most admission officers are in this field because they enjoy working with and hearing from students like you. If someone posts their contact information, you should feel like you can use it, as long as you use it appropriately. Using contact information appropriately means emailing admission officers with well thought out in depth questions. Asking about average TOEFL scores, deadlines, and other questions like that are not well thought out. Personally, when I was an admission officer, I rarely answered those emails, because I didn't have the time to do your research for you. It also gives a kind of a bad impression, when you ask those types of questions. Furthermore, emailing without a question is also not really appropriate. How is an admission officer supposed to reply? If you send a note just checking in, what's an admission officer going to say to that? When you email, always make sure that you identify yourself. Include your name, where you're from, and other important information like, I met you at this Education USA advising center or we spoke at the fair in this city. Nameless, faceless emails are much less likely to receive a response. Similarly, poorly written emails are less likely to receive a response. If you don't demonstrate good communication skills, what impression does that give about your ability to study at the university? Now, if English is your second language,

Admission officers understand that your email is not going to be perfectly written, and it doesn't have to be perfectly written. But it has to be understandable, and show that you took some time to write it. Now, please understand, it may take admission officers some time to reply to you particularly at the busiest times of year. It's okay to send a polite reminder email after enough time has passed. Now, one or two days is not enough time. At busy times of the year, it may take an admission officer one or two weeks to reply to your email. Also, do not forward an email that you have already sent. When students would do this to me, I would delete the original email, and keep the forwarded email which would be pushed to the bottom of the list. That would delay my response. Because as a student, you need to be patient when waiting to hear from an admission officer. Now, sometimes you might be disappointed by the response, or the lack of a response that you receive from an admission officer. But what I can say, is that the best emails are the emails most likely to receive not only a response but a good response. So take your time to write a good email. Many universities will also offer you the opportunity to connect with a current student. When offered this opportunity, take it. Current students are one of the best sources of information that you can have about a university. Connecting with current students might be through an online event like a chat. Or it could be one on one by email or Skype. Keep in mind that universities are not allowed to give you the contact information for current students because of U.S. privacy laws. However, you can give a university your contact information and request that a current student contact you. Finally, you might want to consider connecting with a professor in your area of study. The rules for contacting a professor are the same for contacting an admission officer. But remember, professors are even busier than admission officers. By connecting with a university, not only will you have all of your important questions answered, but you will also get a great sense of the personality that that school has. The information that you receive is important. But connecting is really more about the feeling that you get from a university. That feeling that you have about a certain school is going to be really important when it comes time for you to choose the one university that you're going to attend.